

he referred to Teresa Hairston, founder and publisher, Gospel Today; and entertainers Smokie Norful, Mary Mary, and Donnie McClurkin.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom

June 7, 2005

President Bush. Thank you all. Good afternoon. Laura and I are really honored to welcome the Prime Minister and Cherie back to the White House. Welcome, Tony, glad you're here. Congratulations on your great victory. It was a landmark victory, and I'm really thrilled to be able to work with you to spread freedom and peace over the next years.

Our alliance with Great Britain is strong, and it's essential to peace and security. Together our two nations worked to liberate Europe from fascism. Together we defended freedom during the cold war. Today, we're standing together again to fight the war on terror, to secure democracy and freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan and the broader Middle East, and to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction. As we face the challenges and opportunities of a new century, our alliance is stronger than ever.

Prime Minister Blair and I share a common vision of a world that is free, prosperous, and at peace. When men and women are free to choose their own governments, to speak their minds, and to pursue a good life for their families, they build a strong, prosperous, and just society.

This is the vision chosen by Iraqis in elections in January, and the United States and Britain will stand with the Iraqi people as they continue their journey toward freedom and democracy. We'll support Iraqis as they take the lead in providing their own security. Our strategy is clear: We're training Iraqi forces so they can take the fight to the enemy, so they can defend their country. And then our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

By spreading freedom throughout the broader Middle East, we'll end the bitterness and hatred that feed the ideology of terror. We're working together to help build the

democratic institutions of a future Palestinian state. We support Israel's disengagement from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. We're advancing the vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

We also share a commitment to help the people of Africa build strong democratic institutions and healthy economies. The Prime Minister has made the promotion of reform and development in Africa a centerpiece of the G-8 summit that the United Kingdom will be hosting next month. And I'm grateful for your vision, and I'm grateful for your leadership on this important subject.

Helping those who suffer and preventing the senseless death of millions of people in Africa is a central commitment of my administration's foreign policy. We're making historic progress in helping the poorest countries in Africa gain a fresh start and to build a future of greater opportunity and prosperity. America will continue to lead the world to meet our duty in helping the world's most vulnerable people.

Over the past 4 years, we have tripled our assistance to sub-Saharan Africa, and now America accounts for nearly a quarter of all the aid in the region. And we're committed to doing more in the future. We also agree that highly indebted developing countries that are on the path to reform should not be burdened by mountains of debt. Our countries are developing a proposal for the G-8 that will eliminate 100 percent of that debt, and that, by providing additional resources, will preserve the financial integrity of the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

As we work with African nations to develop democratic institutions and vibrant economies that will provide greater opportunity for all Africans, we must also address emergency needs. I'm pleased to announce the United States will provide approximately \$674 million of additional resources to respond to humanitarian emergencies in Africa. One of those emergencies is the growing hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa. In response to this need, \$414 million of those additional resources will be provided immediately to avert

famine there. We urge the international community to join us in committing greater resources to the humanitarian needs in Africa.

I also look forward to working with the Prime Minister through the G-8 to forge a new strategy for the 21st century that helps countries achieve economic prosperity, energy security, and a clean environment to improve public health by cutting air—public air pollution and to address global change, subjects which I look forward to discussing at the G-8, Mr. Prime Minister. To develop and make available clean and efficient technologies that will help attain these goals has got to be part of our dialog at the G-8.

I look forward to also continuing our discussion to support freedom and democracy in the broader Middle East.

The United States congratulates the United Kingdom as it takes over the Presidency of the EU on July the first. The United States has a wide-ranging and active agenda with Europe, and we're determined to work together to meet the global challenges common to us all. The Prime Minister and I believe a strong Europe that acts in partnership with the United States is important for world peace.

I appreciate your leadership, Tony Blair. I appreciate your friendship. I appreciate your courage, and I appreciate your vision. Welcome back to America.

Prime Minister Blair. Thank you very much, indeed, Mr. President, and I say how delighted we are to be back here in the White House and to say thank you for your warm welcome.

And we've also got a busy agenda ahead of us in the international community over the coming months. We've obviously discussed, as the President has just indicated, the issues to do with the G-8 summit. And on Africa, I think there is a real and common desire to help that troubled continent come out of the poverty and deprivation that so many millions of its people suffer. In a situation where literally thousands of children die from preventable diseases every day, it's our duty to act, and we will.

But we know that there are two things very clear about Africa today. The first is, that though it is important that we commit the resources to Africa that are necessary, it's not

just about resources. It's also about debt. It's about trade. It's about making sure that we deal with these diseases, HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB, polio, that are killing so many people. It's about conflict resolution and having the proper peacekeeping and peace enforcement mechanisms.

And it's about making sure that in doing this, that it's not a something-for-nothing deal. We also need to make sure that there is a commitment on the part of the African leadership to proper governance, to action against corruption, to making sure that the aid and the resources that we're prepared to commit actually go to the people that need it and do the job that it's supposed to do.

So we are trying to create a framework in which we deal not just with one of the issues to do with Africa but all of them together and deal with it on a basis of a partnership with the African leadership that's prepared to embrace the same values of democracy and freedom that we embrace.

In respect of debt and debt cancellation, I'm pleased at the progress that we're making. And I think we are well on the way—I hope we can, if we're able to, conclude a deal at the finance ministers' meeting this weekend, but one that will involve 100 percent debt cancellation and also the commitment of the additional funding necessary to make sure that the institutions aren't penalized as a result of that. And if that substantial funding is added also to the debt cancellation, I think it will make a real difference to those African countries.

But we know there's a lot more to do. And over the coming weeks, in the run-up to the summit that will take place in Scotland, we want to carry on working on the specific programs in relation to things like education and infrastructure and dealing with the killer diseases, that allow us to make the commitment that we need.

On climate change, I think everyone knows there are different perspectives on this issue. But I also think that it's increasingly obvious, whatever perspective people have and whatever—from whatever angle they come at this issue, there is a common commitment and desire to tackle the challenges of climate change, of energy security and energy supply. And we need to make sure that

we do that. And again, I hope over the coming weeks, we will work closely on this.

On the Middle East and the Middle East peace process—of course, we had a discussion about this. I would just like to emphasize again the vital necessity of making sure that democracy succeeds in Iraq. Our troops work together very, very closely there, and I would like to pay tribute not just to the bravery of the British troops that work there and other coalition troops but to the United States forces that do such a magnificent job there and often in very, very difficult circumstances. And yet it is absolutely vital for the security not just of that country and of that region but of the world, that we succeed in Iraq. And the reason it's tough is because people know what's at stake. And what's at stake is the ability of Iraq finally to function properly as a democracy, run for the good of its people. And our help in ensuring that Iraq can attain that goal is of vital importance, not just to our countries but to the future of the world.

In addition, of course, the progress that's being made in respect to the Middle East peace process is very welcome. Mr. President, I'd like to thank you for your leadership on that issue, which has been extremely important.

We also had an opportunity to discuss issues to do with Iran and Libya and Afghanistan and a range of different matters. But once again, let me thank you very much for inviting me here and to come back after my reelection. Thank you for the kind words about that. And I look forward to working not just on the issues to do with the G-8 but on the full range of the international agenda with you. It's a good alliance and a good partnership for our two countries, and I believe for the wider world.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Prime Minister Blair. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Bush. We'll answer two questions a side. Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

U.S. Aid to Africa

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Prime Minister Blair has been pushing for wealthy na-

tions to double aid to Africa. With American aid levels among the lowest in the G-8 as per portion of national income and the problems on the continent so dire, why isn't doubling U.S. aid a good idea?

President Bush. Well, first, as I said in my statement, we've tripled aid to Africa. Africa is an important part of my foreign policy. I remember when I first talked to Condi when I was trying to convince her to become the National Security Adviser, she said, "Are you going to pay attention to the continent of Africa?" I said, "You bet." And I've fulfilled that commitment. We've convinced Congress to triple aid. We've got a significant HIV/AIDS initiative that we're undertaking. We started what's called the Millennium Challenge Account, and we'll do more down the road.

Now, in terms of whether or not the formula that you commented upon are the right way to analyze the United States commitment to her, I don't think it is. I mean, I don't think—there's a lot of things that aren't counted in our desire to spread compassion. But our country is—has taken the lead in Africa, and we'll stay there. It's the right thing to do. It's important to help Africa get on her feet.

And by the way, I think one of things that many African nations have come to discover is that through trade they can develop a more hopeful society rather than through aid. I mean, aid helps, but we passed what's called AGOA, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, and have extended it. It passed during President Clinton's period. My administration extended it, with Congress, and it's made an enormous difference to young economies. When you open up your market to entrepreneurs and small businesses, it helps spread wealth. And that's, after all, what we're trying to achieve.

So I'm proud of our accomplishments, and we'll continue to take the lead on the issue.

Prime Minister Blair. Okay—Andy [Andrew Marr, BBC].

President Bush. Andy is still with you.

Prime Minister Blair. He is.

Debt Relief/Reciprocation of African Nations

Q. For a brief period, Mr. President. I'm from BBC. Could I ask both leaders—I understand from what you say that you're pretty close to cracking the differences between you about how to pay for debt cancellation for the poorest countries. Is that the case, and can you tell us any more about that?

And also, if I may, to the President, Mr. Blair's Africa Commission has really raised the ante quite a lot in Africa, talking about this big historic moment for the world and the continent. Do you see it that way too?

President Bush. I do. That's why we tripled aid. I see we have got a fantastic opportunity, presuming that the countries in Africa make the right decisions. Nobody wants to give money to a country that's corrupt, where leaders take money and put it in their pocket. No developed nation is going to want to support a government that doesn't take an interest in her people, that doesn't focus on education and health care. We're really not interested in supporting a government that doesn't have open economies and open markets. We expect there to be a reciprocation. That's what the Prime Minister talked about.

But absolutely, it's a great opportunity. And I'm honored to be working with the Prime Minister on this important subject.

Prime Minister Blair. I think in relation to the debt cancellation, yes, I think we're well on the way to agreement on that. But it's important to realize we need, obviously, America and the UK to be in agreement, but then we need to get the agreement of the others. So we've got to watch how we manage that process and bring everyone into it.

But yes, I think there is a real desire to make sure that we cancel the debt and cancel the debt in such a way that it doesn't inhibit or disadvantage the international institutions.

I think, in relation to Africa more generally, it's important—in respect to the Africa Commission report—we set out a figure of the doubling of aid, and \$25 billion extra is effectively what that would mean. But the important thing is not to take the figure out of the air but to realize the Commission for Africa reached that figure on the basis of an analysis of what Africa needs. And I think

that this is what we can do over the coming weeks.

In relation to specific areas where we accept there is a real need and we can act and we can act in a way, what is more, that is not going to waste the money given but is going to put it to the use to which it's supposed to be put—on education, on malaria, on HIV/AIDS, on things like water sanitation, on the peacekeeping, peace enforcement aspect of conflict resolution in Africa—we have got the chance over the next period of time to make a definitive commitment, but it is a two-way commitment. We require the African leadership—this is what the President is saying—we require the African leadership also to be prepared to make the commitment on governance, against corruption, in favor of democracy, in favor of the rule of law.

Now, there are African nations that are prepared to make that commitment today. They're going to get help. What we're not going to do is waste our countries' money. So that is the nature of what we are trying to put together. Obviously, there's going to be a lot of discussions over the next few weeks to—because it's at Gleneagles that we will get the final package there. But I'm hopeful after the discussions that we've had today that we can get there.

President Bush. Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Downing Street Memo

Q. Thank you, sir. On Iraq, the so-called Downing Street memo from July 2002 says intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy of removing Saddam through military action. Is this an accurate reflection of what happened? Could both of you respond?

Prime Minister Blair. Well, I can respond to that very easily. No, the facts were not being fixed in any shape or form at all, and let me remind you that that memorandum was written before we then went to the United Nations. Now, no one knows more intimately the discussions that we were conducting as two countries at the time than me. And the fact is we decided to go to the United Nations and went through that process, which resulted in the November 2002

United Nations resolution, to give a final chance to Saddam Hussein to comply with international law. He didn't do so. And that was the reason why we had to take military action.

But all the way through that period of time, we were trying to look for a way of managing to resolve this without conflict. As it happened, we weren't able to do that because, as I think was very clear, there was no way that Saddam Hussein was ever going to change the way that he worked or the way that he acted.

President Bush. Well, I—you know, I read kind of the characterizations of the memo, particularly when they dropped it out in the middle of his race. I'm not sure who "they dropped it out" is, but—I'm not suggesting that you all dropped it out there. [Laughter] And somebody said, "Well, you know, we had made up our mind to go to use military force to deal with Saddam." There's nothing farther from the truth.

My conversation with the Prime Minister was, "How could we do this peacefully? What could we do?" And this meeting, evidently, that took place in London happened before we even went to the United Nations—or I went to the United Nations. And so it's—look, both us of didn't want to use our military. Nobody wants to commit military into combat. It's the last option. The consequences of committing the military are very difficult. The hardest things I do as the President is to try to comfort families who've lost a loved one in combat. It's the last option that the President must have, and it's the last option I know my friend had as well.

And so we worked hard to see if we could figure out how to do this peacefully, take a—put a united front up to Saddam Hussein, and say, "The world speaks," and he ignored the world. Remember, 1441 passed the Security Council unanimously. He made the decision. And the world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

Prime Minister Blair. Nick.

Eradication of Poverty in Africa/Climate Change

Q. Nick Robinson, ITV News. You've talked of what you've hoped to do for Africa. Do you regard the phrase "make poverty his-

tory" as rhetoric from rock stars? Or do you really believe in your gut that this the year it could happen?

And Mr. President, if I may as well on climate change—you didn't talk about climate change—do you believe that climate change is manmade and that you, personally, as the leader of the richest country in the world, have a responsibility to reverse that change?

President Bush. Let me address your first question. Talk about—you said I'm willing to talk about what we're going to do. I want you to focus on what we have done, for starters. I mean, part of the—part of this world, we've got a lot of big talkers. What I like to say is my administration actually does what we say we're going to do, and we have. When I say we're going to make a commitment to triple aid in Africa, I meant it, and we did. When I said we're going to lead an initiative, an HIV/AIDS initiative, the likes of which the world has never seen before, on the continent of Africa, we have done that, and we're following through. And so when I say we're going to do more, I think you can take that to the bank, as we say, because of what we have done. We have taken a leadership role.

Second question—do I believe in my gut we can eradicate poverty? I do believe we can eradicate poverty. And by the way, Bono has come to see me. I admire him. He is a man of depth and a great heart who cares deeply about the impoverished folks on the continent of Africa, and I admire his leadership on the issue. And so I do believe—I don't view—I can't remember how you characterized the rock stars, but I don't characterize them that way, having met the man.

In terms of climate change, I've always said it's a serious, long-term issue that needs to be dealt with. And my administration isn't waiting around to deal with the issue. We're acting. I don't know if you're aware of this, but we lead the world when it comes to dollars spent, millions of dollars spent on research about climate change. We want to know more about it. It's easier to solve a problem when you know a lot about it. And if you look at the statistics, you'll find the United States has taken the lead on this research.

Secondly, we're spending a lot of money on developing ways to diversify away from a hydrocarbon society. America must do that for national security reasons and economic security reasons. And that's why I laid out the Hydrogen Fuel Cell Initiative, with the understanding that our country is going to have to diversify away from the type of automobiles we drive.

And it's beginning to happen here. We'll have more fuel cells—cars driven by fuel cells on the road next year than we had the past year, and more after that. We're beginning to change. Technology is changing how we can approach energy, and the technology—mating technology and energy independence from hydrocarbon also will produce a cleaner environment.

We're spending a lot of money on clean coal technology. That's going to be very important for a country like ours and a country like China. And one of the issues we've got to deal—figure out how to deal with is how we share that technology with developing nations. You cannot leave developing nations out of the mix if you expect to have a cleaner world.

I strongly believe that the world needs to share technologies on nuclear power. I don't see how you can be—diversify away from hydrocarbons unless you use clean nuke. And so we need to work together on developing technologies that will not only ensure people that nuclear power will be safe but that we can dispose of it in a safe way.

I'll tell you an interesting opportunity for not only here but for the rest of the world is biodiesel. That is a fuel developed from soybeans. I kind of, in jest, like to travel our country, saying, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if someday the President sat down and looked at the crop report, and said, 'Man, we've got a lot of soybeans. It means we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy.' " We're spending money to figure out how best to refine soy into diesel.

See, there's a lot of things we're doing in America, and I believe that not only can we solve greenhouse gas, I believe we will. And I appreciate the Prime Minister bringing this issue up. I look forward to sharing that which we know here in America with not only the G-8 members but, equally importantly, with

developing countries. And not only that, I'm convinced that we can use technology to help keep the air cleaner and the water purer and develop economies around the world at the same time. That's going to be one of the great advances in technology in the coming years.

Thank you for your question. Good to see you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:46 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Cherie Booth Blair, wife of Prime Minister Blair; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and musician and activist Bono.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey

June 8, 2005

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome to the Oval Office. We've had an extensive visit about a lot of issues, and the reason why is because Turkey and the United States has an important strategic relationship. I told the Prime Minister how grateful I was that he was a—is a strong supporter of the broader Middle Eastern initiative. Turkey's democracy is an important example for the people in the broader Middle East, and I want to thank you for your leadership.

Along these lines, I thanked the Prime Minister for Turkey's leadership role in Afghanistan. I was most impressed by his report from his trip to Afghanistan and his deep concern for the conditions of the people there and his desire to work with the United States and NATO countries to help improve the lives of the children, for example, in Afghanistan.

We discussed a lot of foreign policy and shared interests between our countries. And one of the most important foreign policy initiatives of my administration—and I know the Prime Minister shares the same desire—is to work with the Palestinians so they can have their own state, their own democracy, living side by side in peace with Israel.

And finally, we discussed the domestic issues. We discussed our economies, and the Prime Minister reminded me that the—in his judgment, Turkey is a good place for U.S.